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Alternatively, Australia can resist being seduced into the game, retire to the rock pools on the edge of the big pond, and double our defences. We could argue that the risk of becoming shark bait for the rival sharks is too great and that the supposedly friendly sharks will not take much notice of us anyway when real national interests are at stake.

The arguments for this option seem to be growing stronger all the time, but

only if we have the political will to 'double our defences' in the widest sense of the term. We need a vision of an Australia which is *physically* strong because all its citizens participate in a citizens' military force based on the Swiss model; *economically* strong because we have extricated ourselves from the frightening burden of foreign debt and from the tyranny of foreign economic decision making; and *diplomatically* strong in world councils because we have built a reputation for an independent stance on global issues, for sharing our riches, for neutrality and non-intervention in third party affairs.

Pie in the sky perhaps, but the more we mix with the sharks, the more likely they will have us for dinner.

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